

What Is Self-Esteem?



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Self esteem is the way you feel about yourself...

When you feel good about yourself, you have high or positive self-esteem.

When you don't like yourself very much, you have low or negative self-esteem.

Self-esteem begins to develop in infancy and is shaped by the feedback children receive from parents and other significant people in their lives.

Some believe that self-esteem is the single most important element in children's lives. It affects everything they do.

Children with high self-esteem:



- Are physically healthier
- Are more motivated to learn
- Get along better with others

Children with positive self-esteem are more willing to:



- Tap into their creativity and risk expressing it
- Approach life with energy, enthusiasm and curiosity
- Stretch themselves to their full potential

Positive self-esteem facilitates:



- Self-confidence
- Self-direction.
- Self-reliance
- Responsibility

Your primary challenge is to find ways to build this strong sense of self-worth and positive self-esteem.

How can a mentor help?

Listen to and acknowledge your mentee's thoughts and feelings.

Let your mentee experience success, no matter how small.

Show your mentee he/she is loveable and capable.

Model your own healthy self-esteem.

Treat your mentee as an individual.

Help your mentee understand that, although you may dislike a specific behavior, you do not disapprove of him/her as an individual.

Recognize and value cultural diversity.

If your mentee fails in an endeavor, help him/her understand that there are many ways in which he/she has been successful.

Teach your mentee that he/she can turn failure into success by trying again.

Encourage your mentee each time you are together. Identify and acknowledge his/her strengths.



Whether the problem is drug abuse, low school performance or teenage pregnancy, the solution begins with helping children to see themselves as capable, worthwhile and potentially successful individuals."

William Raspberry "First Students Must Value Themselves", The Washington Post, Washington, D.C.; October 1988